

19 Career Goal Examples with Expert Tips for Setting Them

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19 Career Goal Examples with Expert Tips for Setting Them



A career goal defines an endpoint in your professional career that you wish to achieve. You should set career goals as strategies to help you center on progress and have tangible plans to facilitate and achieve these goals. Short- and long-term goals can be created so that you are making incremental steps and working toward your desired culmination.

In this article, we talk about how goals can be motivators; we provide 19 career goal examples for you to think over and a few tips for you to set them.

Why are these career goals important?

Career goals matter because they define a target that becomes a fundamental source of inspiration, helping you change from being static to becoming proactive in your career. The achievements that you attain in your professional life can be rewarding personally. For instance, receiving promotions is a positive step that most people consider since it is likely to increase your salary, hence permitting you to live in a greater degree of comfort.

Career goals can be short or long term, and successful goals often follow the SMART acronym, which stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

SMART is a way of creating goals that can be put into action and are achievable. This is applied in many professions as a standard way of setting goals for one's career and evaluating how successful one has been with the set goals. For example, by applying the SMART approach, one should be working towards receiving a promotion, wage bonus, or higher-level position within the organization.

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1. Improve performance

Think of setting a goal toward improving your performance at work, both in productivity and efficiency. This may be beneficial in advancing your career as a professional. To reach this goal, you might want to consider evaluating performance indicators, i.e., the quality of your work or the quantity of work processed. Measurable goals can help in achieving target goals and gradually meeting important performance indicators.

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2. Work as an intern in an organization of your choice

An internship not only lets you gain some on-the-job experience but you are also able to see what the work environment is like for the career you are pursuing. Since a number of professions may expect internship experience, try to set a goal to intern at the organization you love the most. To accomplish this goal, you can develop a great internship application and then focus on tailoring it to the particular company you're interested in working for. Make sure to study the organization in detail and find out what qualities they may look for in interns so you can create a suitable application.

3. Ask for a promotion

You probably have a career goal of getting a promotion because it serves to advance your career and develop your professional skills. Ideally, have a discussion with your manager before the promotion and let him or her know you are interested in assuming more responsibility. Your manager can help establish what actions you need to take for your promotion to become a reality.

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4. Find a fulfilling job

Securing a position that you truly enjoy can enhance job satisfaction as well as happiness. This is a goal you can pursue at any point and may require you to switch careers and jobs. Having multiple employers during your working life can help you identify the features you consider vital in enhancing career desirability.

5. Develop your contacts

Networking is important professionally, which is why it's great as a goal; your contacts can assist with many other goals too, such as further career advancement. Meeting and maintaining relationships with professionals in your field of interest enables you to widen your knowledge scope about the industry, including potential job openings. Some contacts in your network can also guide you and aid in enhancing your career competence. Networking events and social media platforms are some of the places where you can develop your contacts.

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6. Accomplish a Certification

Receiving certain endorsements can lead to increased salaries and greater job titles. Many professions offer related endorsements which you may choose to pursue, but some industries are so niche that there aren't relevant certificates for you to strive after. Certifications are also a great form of objectives to reach for at various points during your professional growth.

7. Obtain a Professional Degree

For fields like teaching and engineering, you can obtain a professional degree that certifies you in your area of specialization. This particular degree assists greatly in skill development and knowledge expansion post-graduation. Professional degree holders are often more employed with better paying jobs and enjoy a fair amount of job security.

8. Further Your Education

If there are specific positions in your field that require higher degrees, advancing your education further becomes an excellent goal. If applicable, you may pursue a higher degree while working in your field. Some firms even provide aid towards covering the cost of education for further qualifications.

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9. Start saving early.

Saving for retirement is easier when you open up a savings account early in your career. Creating an automatic weekly savings plan may help you achieve your saving goals each month. Knowing your financial goals may help you search for jobs since you now have a minimum salary figure in mind.

14. Become a leader

If you have natural leadership abilities or enjoy guiding others, becoming a leader is an excellent goal to set for yourself. Being a leader doesn't require you to change your position at work, though this can help. You can become a leader by being supportive and volunteering for additional responsibilities. When preparing to achieve this goal, consider leadership qualities and skills that you may need to develop. For example, leaders are great problem solvers and communicators.

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15. Gain new experiences

There are many professional experiences to pursue in your career. For example, you may work abroad, travel to conferences, speak at events, create a product or lead a project. Having a goal to gain new experiences can help motivate you and provide milestones for long-term goals. For example, gaining experience in leading projects may help you earn promotions.

10. Immerse Yourself

Reaching an expert level in your field will bring with it, job offers, opportunities, and exclusive recognition. This is a long-term goal for which you will put maximum effort toward constantly learning new information and refining your skillset. Identifying a mentor, especially one who is an expert, can significantly aid you in achieving these goals.

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11. Start an Entrepreneurial Venture

Entrepreneurial creative individuals set this goal with the intention of pursuing their interests as a business, which provides the ultimate satisfaction of owning a business. Along with flexible work hours, a business also provides satisfaction of creating products as well as treasure services.

This goal extends beyond just forming a business and also requires knowledge of market research in planning, studying competition, and potential clients. Make sure you understand the nuances connected to managing the business and network with people in the field who could provide aid.

12. Skill Set Development Plans

Goals for enhancing existing skill sets can be crafted by clearly delineating the skills most critical to your job and engaging in activities that strengthen such competencies. While developing skills, it is helpful to solicit the opinion of colleagues about your strengths and weaknesses. Other activities – attending workshops, participating in educational courses, job shadowing, and company training sessions – can also help meet this particular objective.

13. Achieve a Personal Award

Recognition for hard work and dedication can be quite motivating. As such, setting a career goal to win awards will enable many people to want set and strive to achieve goals every day. Some occupations may have their own defined intra-industry awards. Additionally, company awards and national awards can also be goals for many. To earn an award, start being proactive and help others so that your colleagues can recognize your gifts. Earning national or intra-industry awards can be furthered by publishing your work. Depending on the award, submitting an application or being submitted by other practitioners for consideration may also be options.

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16. Cultivating Professional Relationships

Having positive relationships with colleagues in the workplace can influence your attitude and work environment. Employee relations at the workplace can also be very helpful when colleagues are able to work well together for communication, teamwork and productivity. This can be achieved by using appropriate staff relations practices such as attending to staff needs and assisting them on work related tasks. Attempt to engage in frequent informal interactions with colleagues for the purpose of networking to foster and develop ties.

17. Create a Product or Process

Being innovative is a strong asset that can help an individual progress in his career and achieve personal objectives. To innovate a process and product, one must evaluate it for possibilities of improvement. Alternatively, innovation can be defined as the development of an entirely new product or process.

18. To have a better work-life balance

Work-life balance means you find steadfast equilibrium between work and your personal activities. This balance ideally allows you to accomplish all you wish including both personal and professional achievements. Each person has their personal work-life balance thus finding and improving it is a quest of self exploration of how to prioritize various life components.

Identify what matters and create effective ways to manage time in such a manner that enables focusing on all priorities. Your employer's policies and the level of flexibility they might offer could also impact attaining this balance.


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19. Develop a personal brand.

A personal brand is defined by an individual's distinction as opposed to an organizational brand. Think of how you would like other people to define you in order to develop a personal brand. It can enhance your reputation, position you in the industry and portray you as a professional. Freelancers use personal branding to market themselves hence why it is of utmost importance to develop personal branding.

Consider the perceptions people will have concerning your image and personality and how you want them to be associated with you as you develop a personal brand. For example, you may design a personal logo, create a website, and set appropriate social media accounts that represent your personal brand. As with company brands, an individual brand experiences growth when there is cohesive communication and interactions in relation to the established brand.

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